

REFUTING PM – PART 5

I. Introductory Matters:

- A. A common concept amongst denominationalists is that there will be one antichrist.
 - 1. As has been noted, such is an unscriptural conclusion.
 - 2. #500 ἀντίχριστος {antichristos} (**1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7**) – a mindset, not one man, not super-human.
- B. Let's remember how the denominationalists view the one man they believe will come on the scene.
 - 1. He will be some sort of evil super human who shall rise to power during the seven year period of tribulation that is to come upon the earth following the rapture.
 - 2. He will eventually demand the worship of all mankind.
 - 3. In the book, **The Late Great Planet Earth**, Hal Lindsey wrote concerning the antichrist, "*He will have a magnetic personality, be personally attractive, and a powerful speaker. He will be able to mesmerize an audience with his oratory. The Antichrist will deify himself... He will proclaim himself to be God. He will demand that he be worshipped*" (pp. 108-109).
- C. Most denominationalists not only distort the concept of antichrist, but also compound their error. How so?
 - 1. They compound their error by assuming that other portions of scripture are depicting their one man antichrist.
 - 2. The remainder of this study will examine a big P.M. sugar-stick regarding their view of "The Anti-Christ."

II. 2 Thess. 2:1-12

A. Background information:

- 1. Paul had written to the church in Thessalonica teaching them about the literal return of Christ and the wonderful things connected to that event.
- 2. From reading Paul's second letter to the saints in Thessalonica, the careful student can see that some of the saints there were confused by certain heretics who were advocating that the Lord had already returned (somewhat like 70 AD advocates do today).
- 3. Paul (inspired) addressed this situation in **vs. 1-2** of what we today call **chapter 2**. Here is what he wrote:
 - (a) "*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand*" (**KJV**).
 - (b) "*Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come*" (**NASB**).
 - (c) "*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come*" (**NIV**).

B. How Paul dealt with this problem:

- 1. Paul posed a two-pronged argument in **vs.3** in order to demonstrate that the heretics are wrong:
 - (a) Before Jesus returns there must first be a "falling away."
 - (b) Before Jesus returns "that man of sin" must be revealed {comes on the scene; appears}.
- 2. Paul's argument destroys the popular P.M. mindset:
 - (a) Note Paul is discussing the coming of the Lord (the same coming noted in **1 Thess. 4**).
 - (b) Now get this:
 - (i) Paul is telling the Thessalonians that the Lord will not come (**1 Th. 4**) until after the man of sin (**whoever he was referring to**) had been revealed (will be made known – exposed).
 - (ii) The P.M. camp says that the Lord will come (**1 Th. 4**) and then the man of sin (**The Anti-Christ**) will be revealed (will be made known – exposed).
 - (iii) This is a key point.

C. What are the characteristics of the man of sin?

1. He is a product of the “falling away” (3) {#646 ἀποστασία/apostasía} – already developing, but not matured (7).
 - (a) Notice what the text does not say or teach.
 - (b) The text does not say or teach that the man of sin will be a result of the rapture.
 - (c) This is a key point.
2. He will be a lawless person {ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας} (3) – contrary to God’s law.
 - (a) Notice what the text does not say or teach.
 - (b) It does not say anything about him being a political personality, nor a great orator like the P.M. camp maintains.
 - (c) This is a key point.
3. At the time of the writing of **2 Th.**, he was not yet revealed (3) {#601 ἀποκαλύπτω/apokalúptō}.
4. He is also called the son of perdition (3) {#684 ἀπώλεια/apōleia} – the idea is destruction.
 - (a) He may be so called because of the destruction he will cause.
 - (b) He may be so called because his end will be destruction (8).
 - (c) Either choice fits the context. The traditional thought has been #2.
 - (d) Notice the text does not say a word about the battle of Armageddon. This is read into the text by the P.M.
5. He opposes {#480 ἀντίκειμαι/antíkeimai} God – The verb tense denotes continued opposition – fits context (8).
 - (a) The P.M. camp teaches that ‘The Anti-Christ’ will oppose God after Jesus has come and gone (the rapture).
 - (b) The Bible teaches that **1 Th. 4** does not happen until the man of sin is revealed and that his opposition ends when (not after) **1 Th. 4** happens.
 - (c) This is a key point.
6. He exalts {#5229 ὑπεραίρω/huperairō} himself above every other object of worship in the world (false or true) (4).
 - (a) Does the text say that he is the only one who has ever done so?
 - (b) Then is it possible that others have? Yes.
 - (c) Some Roman Emperors did this. The papacy has done this and continues to do this.
 - (d) This is a key point.
 - (e) Do not let them act as if no one else but their Anti-Christ fits the text.
7. He will sit in the temple {#3485 ναός/naós} of God (4).
 - (a) The word is used by Paul seven other times. Interestingly it never has reference to the Jewish temple.
 - (b) Rather it is used to refer to the church as God’s spiritual house (**cf. Eph. 2:19-21**).
 - (c) What compelling evidence is there to make the term refer to the Jewish house of worship in this context?
 - (d) The P.M. camp insists that this is the Jewish Temple rebuilt during the 7 year period after the rapture.
 - (e) Remember part of the quote last time?
 - (i) *“The Antichrist will sit in the Jewish Temple exalting himself as God & demanding to be worshipped.”*
 - (ii) If we are going to stay true to the Pauline usage of ναός/naós and true to all known rules of biblical interpretation then the P.M. cannot be right.
 - (iii) This is a key point.
8. He will show {#584 ἀποδείκνυμι/apodeíknymi} (proclaim) himself to be divine (4).
 - (a) Does the text say that he is the only one who has ever done so?
 - (b) Then is it possible that others have? Yes.
 - (c) Some Roman Emperors did this. The papacy has done this and continues to do this.
 - (d) This is a key point.

- (e) Do not let them act as if no one else but their Anti-Christ fits the text.
9. He was one that Paul had already taught the Thessalonians about when he was with them (5) (**Acts 17:1ff**).
10. He was being withheld {#2722 κατέχω/katéchō} – held in check/ restrained at the time of Paul’s writing (6).
- (a) Note the **NASB** here – “*What restrains him now.*”
- (b) Here, in this verse, the idea is a restraining influence as per the neuter (*what withholdeth*).
- (c) This verse also destroys “The Anti-Christ” of P.M. How so?
- (i) The P.M. camp says the restraining influence is the gospel being preached to the whole world (**Matt.24:14**).
- (ii) If the logic is sound (and it is not) then “The Anti-Christ” they are looking for came in the 1st century (**Col. 1:5-6; 23**).
- (iii) So much for their idea of him being a modern day political leader.
- (iv) If the P.M. push their logic to its end then their rapture had to occur in the 1st century. Thus, they are looking and waiting for something that has already occurred.
- (d) These are key points.
- (e) Something to think about:
- (i) In 53 A.D. what, scripturally speaking, could have been the restraining influence?
- ◆ Completed word of God? No.
 - ◆ Miracles? No.
 - ◆ The apostles and their fellow laborers? Yes (**Acts 20:29-31; 3 John 9-10**).
- (ii) If, indeed, it was the apostles then the P.M. use of this text is over. Why?
- (iii) The view that it was the apostles and their fellow-workers also fits the immediate context. How?
11. The Thessalonians knew what the restraining influence was (6).
- (a) The word “know” {#3608 οἶδα/oída} denotes “*something known by observation*” (**Vine**).
- (b) Same word used in **1 Th.2:1-5**.
- (c) Honestly now, could the Thessalonians “know by observation” The Anti-Christ the P.M. speak of? No.
- (d) This is a key point.
12. He would be revealed in his time {#2540 καιρός/kairós}– an opportune time (6) (**cf. Gal. 6:10**).
- (a) Notice that the text does not say that he would be revealed as a bad guy after 3 ½ years following the rapture.
- (b) The text does teach there was something holding him back in Paul’s day and that force was something the Thessalonians had 1st hand experiential knowledge of.
- (c) Thus, the revealing of the man of sin would come about in an ancient setting, not a modern or future one.
- (d) This is a key point.
13. He would be revealed after the restraining influence was gone (when the opportune time arrived) (**6 & 7-8**).
- (a) “...*the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way and then the lawless one will be revealed...*” (**NIV**).
- (b) Here we learn the restraining force was a person or persons “*he who now restrains*” (**NASB**).
- (c) Again, the revealing would be in an ancient setting – it has already happened - it is not around the corner.
- (d) This is a key point.
14. He will be consumed {#337 ἀναιρέω/anairēō} by the spirit {breath} of the Lord’s Mouth (8).
- (a) The breath of God is figurative language for the power of God (**cf. Ps.33:6**).
- (b) Regarding the wicked, “*by the breath of his (God’s) mouth shall he go away*” (**Job 15:30**).
- (c) Notice that the text says nothing about World War 3.

15. He will be destroyed {#2673 καταργέω/katargéō /invalidated} when the Lord comes (end of time) – context **1 Th. 4**.
- When Christ appears the man of sin will no longer be able to exalt himself – he will finally be exposed as the phony he is and will be punished along with all other enemies of God.
 - Since the falling away took place centuries ago, then logic forces us to conclude that the man of sin is not one person (since he will still exist when Christ comes), but a succession of individuals all occupying the same position.
 - Note:
 - The P.M. camp claims The Anti-Christ will be exposed as a phony (invalidated) 3 ½ years after the rapture.
 - This text is teaching that the man of sin will remain in his lofty position (unexposed) until the Lord returns.
 - Thus, the man of sin cannot be The Anti-Christ they are looking for.
 - This is a key point.
16. He comes {appears on the scene – #3952 Παρουσία/parousía} after {#2596 Κατά/katá} the working of Satan (**9**).
- Per Κατά/katá – This is a preposition, which means according to; in conformity with Satan and his character.
 - Note:
 - The text did not say he is the literal seed of Satan or some other fanciful P.M. idea.
 - The text is teaching that the man’s agenda is in line with Satan’s.
 - This is a key point.
17. He will come with all power {#1411 {δύναμις/dúnamis} and signs {#4592 σημεῖον/sēmeíon} and lying {#5579 ψεῦδος/pseudo} wonders {# 5059 τέρας/téras} (**9**).
- Power is not the same word for power in **Matt. 28:18**. The idea there is authority.
 - The idea here has to do with the miracles.
 - Clarke has an interesting note on the Greek grammar here: “*The word lying may be applied to the whole of these; they were lying miracles, lying signs, and lying wonders.*”
 - Some see these as real miracles allowed by God (**11**) only in the miraculous age of the first century and after the close of the miraculous age as continued false miracles.
 - Some see these are fake miracles in the first century and fake miracles in all centuries after. This is based on the fact that his work is deemed unrighteous deception (**10 – NKJV**).
 - Either way the man of sin will justify his actions and demands for worship from a miraculous context.
 - Note:
 - The P.M. believe this is referring to real miracles done by The Anti-Christ in a modern context.
 - Yet, the scripture teaches us that the miraculous age is over (**Zech. 13:2; 1 Cor.13:18-10; Eph. 4:8-13**).
 - This is a key point.
18. He will have great influence over those who love not the truth but readily accept falsehood (**11-12**).
- Notice that God is sending this – it means he allows it.
 - This is not out of harmony with scripture at all (**cf. Job; cf. Hab. 1:13, et al**).

D. Who is the man of sin?

- We can know for sure that he is not “The Anti-Christ” so often spoken of by the P.M. camp.
- Their view does not come close to fitting into **2 Th. 2:1-12**.
- All sorts of ideas have been put out there. I am convinced that the man of sin either equates to Roman Emperors who deified themselves or to the papacy which has done the same.
- At the present time I am leaning more towards #2 for a variety of reasons, but listing such is not needful for this study. Our purpose was to see if the P.M. use of the text is valid. We have done so and seen that it is not valid.